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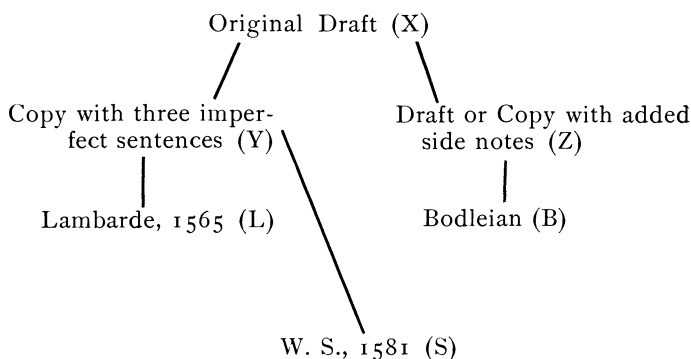
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*A Discourse of The Common Weal of This Realm of England.* First Printed in 1581, and commonly attributed to W. S. Edited from the MSS. by ELIZABETH LAMOND. Cambridge: The University Press, 1893. 8vo. pp. lxxii+200.

A book like this is a delight to the scholar. Every page of the introductions, supplements, appendices, and notes is as thorough and exhaustive as could well be. And it has the charm, too, of establishing a distinct contention—that the dialogue must have been written long before 1581, and is thus not a description of England in the time of Shakspeare's youth, or in the time of Elizabeth, as it has been supposed to be, but of England in the time of Edward VI. Miss Lamond found out that none of the editors of the treatise seemed to have been aware of any manuscript copies, while there were in fact two, the Bodleian and the Lambarde. The Bodleian (formerly in the possession of the Earl of Jersey) was noticed in the *Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (Appendix, part 1. p. 92), but it was not associated at all with the W. S. treatise, as its title was somewhat different, and as it bore no name. The other manuscript, the Lambarde, is now in the possession of Mr. Lambarde, of Beechmont, Kent, who placed it at the disposal of Miss Lamond and Dr. Cunningham for some time. The Introduction to the present volume groups the sources for the text in the following way :



Miss Lamond found her clew to her total reconstruction of the ordinary views on the whole matter in the note written by William Lambarde in his copy of the Dialogue, which says that he himself had "long had" his copy, which he "caused to be written out in the year

1565," although the book was "published in printe under the Title of a briefe conceipte of Inglishche policie by one W. S. in the yeare 1581," and that, as matter of fact, the book "was long synce penned by S<sup>r</sup>. Thomas Smythe (as some say), or Mr. John Hales (as others thinke), either in the reigne of H. 8 or E. the 6." "The question of author-ship" thus became no longer a "mere discussion of the identity of W. S.," but had to be "examined afresh with the help of the internal evidence furnished by the treatise in its earlier form."

The discussion of all the internal evidence given by the original manuscripts, which professed to be records of an actual conversation, led Miss Lamond to the conclusion that the treatise was most probably the work of Mr. John Hales, himself the original of the Knight in the dialogue, who was describing the condition of England, as he knew it in the autumn of 1549, after his work on the Enclosure Commission of 1548, and when the people had broken out "partly for enclosures, and partly for religion, into an open and formidable insurrection in most counties in England." Further, the place of the dialogue seems to have been Coventry in Warwickshire, and the theoretically most important personage in the dialogues seems to have been drawn from Latimer, once Bishop of Worcester. Evidently, no positive conclusion can be drawn as to who W. S. was. The most likely person seems to have been William Smith, the nephew of Sir Thomas Smith, who was recalled from Ireland in 1581, where he had been endeavoring to establish his title to his uncle's estates. All this is very important. It must strike readers of the W. S. tract that many things in it, such as the *general* discontent of the community, are more intelligible when viewed as applying to a state of matters earlier than the second half of the reign of Elizabeth, and the specific references to the change of religious opinion as a cause of economic evils, which sometimes seemed purely due to the personal equation on the part of the "Doctor", become most intelligible when connected with the reign of Edward VI., which is so remarkable for the progress of the Reformation of the English Church. On the whole, the dialogue is lit up with significance when taken to refer to the state of some of the midland counties of England in 1549, the year of publication of *The First Book of Common Prayer*, an outcome of the Religious Commissions, and the year of the Ket rebellion.

Miss Lamond deserves high praise for the careful examination to which she has subjected several allusions of the dialogues. The location of the scene of the dialogue at Coventry, seems conclusively made out from the connection of John Hales with Coventry, and the agreement that exists between several matters in the dialogue, relating to the decay of the towns owing to guild restrictions and to "mysteries," and the descriptions of Dugdale (known as a writer on the draining of the Fens and Marshes) in his *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. It satisfies the mind, too, to have a close connection between the well-known sermons of Latimer and the W. S. work, and the case for the identity of the Doctor and Latimer is well made out.

All of the manuscripts have their interest, some having marginal notes and an index, and others not. Even the W. S. publication has an interest through some insertions, which are here seen to have an intimate connection with some suggestions of Bodin, in his well known *Discours sur le rehaussement, etc.* (1578), about the influence of American silver. Everything at all relevant is presented in the book. The text follows the Lambarde MS. on the whole, but the notes give all possible references to the Bodleian and the W. S. texts. There is an important Appendix to the Introduction, on "John Hales and the Commission on Enclosures"; Hales's paper the "Causes of Dearth", is reprinted from the original draft in the Record Office, and also a draft of one of three bills brought into Parliament by Hales on "The Decay of Tillage"; and there is also a reprint of *The defence of John Hales agenst certeyn sclauanders and false reaportes made of hym*. The authors have even given us the text of some letters connected with William Smith and the Ardes. The scholar will be pleased to see a reproduction of Lambarde's note on his copy of the dialogue. The transcription of the two manuscripts, and the general collation of the texts must have meant no end of diligence and trouble. Of course, it was already recognized how important the body of opinions put into the mouth of the Doctor were for economic theory. No student who is fond of tracing the beginnings of modern economic policy and practice, indeed no student of English history, can afford to neglect this delightful and important book.

W. CALDWELL.